



EAST TIMOR TALKS CAMPAIGN

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MEDIA RELEASE

EAST TIMOR CAMPAIGN WELCOMES VISIT OF IRISH PRESIDENT

The visit to Melbourne this week of the Irish President, Mary Robinson and her Foreign Minister, David Andrews, is of particular interest to the East Timorese community and those working for a political settlement of the conflict in East Timor.

The coordinator of the East Timor Talks Campaign, Mr Pat Walsh, said today that Mrs Robinson has had a long-standing personal concern about East Timor and her Foreign Minister, David Andrews, met with East Timor's special representative, Jose Ramos Horta, in Dublin on 15 September.

As a mark of her concern, the Irish President has invited the President of the Timorese community in Melbourne, Ms Emilia Pires, to attend a reception in Mrs Robinson's honour this Friday. The reception will be held at the Grand Hyatt at 6.00 pm.

At his meeting with Jose Ramos Horta, Mr Andrews re-stated the Irish Government's support for the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination. Mr Andrews also pledged to raise the issue of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor at international forums such as the EC Council of Ministers and the United Nations.

Emilia Pires will present the Irish President with a gift and a petition when they meet next Friday.

'Ireland's concern over East Timor no doubt reflects its concern to resolve the Northern Ireland conflict through negotiations with the assistance of Australia's Sir Ninian Stephens', said Mr Walsh.

'We believe the same energy and spirit of dialogue should be applied to East Timor and hope the Irish Government will act where the Australian government has failed so abysmally', said Mr Walsh.

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The East Timor Talks Campaign is endorsed by: Australian Council for Overseas Aid; Bob Brown; Sr Veronica Brady; Hon John Dawd, QC; Maran Ferguson; Tom Uren; Bill Armstrong; Dr Keith Suter; Janet Powell; Rev Dr Sandy Yule; Phillip Adams; Jo Vallentine; James Dunn; Justice Marcus Einfeld; Prof Peter Singer; Heather Southcott, AM; Fr Bob Maguire, AM; Dr Joe Camilleri; Sr Angela Ryan; Judith Wright; David Soon; Bishop Paul Moore Jr; John Wheeldon; Dr Jocelyne Scull; Frank Brennan, SJ; Hon Michael Kirby; Bob Debus; Russell Kollason; David Suzuki; Justice Elizabeth Evon, AO; Naam Chomsky; Thomas Keneally; Stello Cornelius, AO OBE; Timothy Mo; Rodney Hall; Elsie Atkin; Rev Richard Wootton; Prof Garth Neuhem; Dr Ross Fitzgerald; Kax Cooke; Rev Dorothy McMahon; Bill Eithell; David Shimick; Senator John Coulter; Dr David Armstrong; Dr Hilary Charlesworth; Dr Judy Henderson; Prof Charles Birch; Faith Hundler; Tom Kelly; Mollie Mussen; Bishop Brian Kyme; Sr Janet Mead; Dr Richard Toner; Michael Sullivan OAM.